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## County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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September 28, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair  
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From: Philip L. Browning  
Director

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "P. Browning", is written over the printed name and title of Philip L. Browning.

### BOYS TOWN CALIFORNIA GROUP HOME QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) attempted to conduct a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Boys Town California Group Home (the Group Home) in June 2016. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 12 and has one site located in Orange County. The Group Home provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed foster children, Probation youth, as well as children from other counties. According to the Group Home's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "help each child learn the skills and behaviors that are necessary for successful entry into adulthood."

The QAR looks at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency, and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the Group Home's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. However, there have been no DCFS placed children at the Group Home since the last QAR because the Group Home does not admit emergency placements and DCFS routinely requests emergency placements of the Group Home. The Group Home's intake assessment process can take up to five days. The OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer will be meeting with the Group Home to discuss their intake process. Therefore, the 9 focus areas of Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment could not be evaluated. Information in this report was based solely on interviews with the Group Home staff. The Group Home staff reported on its efforts to address the findings from the 2014-2015 QAR and its practices to ensure quality care and services to placed children.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

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If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:KR  
KDR:rds

#### Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer  
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee  
Lawren Ramos, Executive Director, Boys Town California Group Home  
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division  
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**BOYS TOWN CALIFORNIA GROUP HOME  
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)  
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

**SCOPE OF REVIEW**

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Boys Town California Group Home (the Group Home) in June 2016. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the Group Home's service delivery and to ensure that the Group Home is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

**Status Indicators:**

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

**Practice Indicators:**

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the Group Home's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

Child interviews were not conducted, as there have been no DCFS placed children at the Group Home since the last QAR because the Group Home does not accept emergent placements and DCFS routinely requests emergency placements of the Group. The Group Home's intake assessment process can take up to five days. The OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer will be meeting with the Group Home to discuss their intake process. The information in this report is based solely on interviews with the Group Home staff.

**QAR SCORING**

The Group Home received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
<b>Safety</b> - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Permanency</b> - The degree to which the focus children are living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the Group Home staff, caregivers, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Placement Stability</b> - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
<b>Visitation</b> - The degree to which the Group Home staff support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Engagement</b> - The degree to which the Group Home staff working with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Service Needs</b> - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
<b>Assessment &amp; Linkages</b> - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Teamwork</b> - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Tracking &amp; Adjustment</b> - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the Group Home in April 2015, and noted opportunities for improvement in the focus areas of Visitation and Teamwork. In August 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the Group Home with technical support to address methods for improvement in these two areas. At the time of the 2015-2016 QAR, there were no DCFS placed children. Therefore, the 9 focus areas of Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment could not be

evaluated. However, the Group Home staff reported on its efforts to address the findings from the 2014-2015 QAR and its practices to ensure quality care and services to the placed children.

**STATUS INDICATORS**  
*(Measured over last 30 days)*

<b>Status Indicators</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>Permanency</b>	<b>Placement Stability</b>	<b>Visitation</b>
<b>2014-2015 Scores</b>	6	5	5	4
<b>2015-2016 Scores</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

In the area of Safety, the Group Home Program Director reported that the Group Home demonstrates great efforts in keeping all placed children safe. The exterior, interior and common areas of the homes are well maintained and free from safety hazards. According to the Group Home family teacher, the placed children and their family members must be safe and feel safe before they can begin making progress toward achieving their goals. The Group Home family teacher further shared that the safety and rights of each placed child and family member are constantly monitored and protected.

In the area of Permanency, the Group Home Program Director indicated that the permanency process begins at the time the child is admitted into the Group Home program. The Group Home family teachers or assistant family teachers, and the Group Home's family home program administrative staff work closely with child placement agencies, the placed child and his/her family members in an effort to determine the best permanency plan for the placed child. When possible, the Group Home staff offers support services to family members, which includes consultation, counseling, crisis intervention, and assistance with home visits. The placed children are provided with individualized resource referrals as needed, upon departure from the Group Home. If family reunification is not the permanency plan, the Group Home provides permanency services that include Emancipation and Youth Development Services to assist the placed children in becoming self-sufficient. The Group Home also assists the placed children in the exploration of employment opportunities. The Group Home's primary goal is to provide a program that ensures intensive services and care to those children who can be home with their family members or placed in a less restrictive setting, or become more independent to successfully transition into adulthood.

In the area of Placement Stability, the Group Home family teacher explained that the Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 12 facility and provides a therapeutic environment by providing a "family" that offers stability, security, and effective services. Each of the five homes are "staffed" by surrogate parents called family teachers, who are couples and live with the placed children on a 24-hour basis, seeing that each placed child's physical, emotional, and service needs are met. Additionally, one to two full-time assistant family teachers are assigned to each home to assist with the daily children activities during the peak hours. The Group Home takes responsibility in ensuring the placed children receive the

necessary resources to help them achieve their goals and to achieve stability at the Group Home, at school, and in the community.

In the area of Visitation, the Group Home Program Director reported that the Group Home has made efforts to address the issues from the 2014-2015 QAR. During the 2014-2015 QAR, the OHCMD noted that the Group Home needed to make efforts to encourage visitation, as well as support communication between the placed children and their family members who refused visits. Further, when it was determined that visitation was no longer viable, the Group Home needed to refer the placed child to a mentoring program to assist him or her in developing a lifelong connection. The Group Home Program Director reported that the Group Home has improved its practices, and when children are placed, the Group Home staff will assist the placed children in maintaining family connections and encourage placed children to maintain regular contact with their family members/NREFMs, significant others, or mentors. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the visits and maintains visitation logs. Missed visits are rescheduled in a timely manner. The Group Home also links placed children to Team Leadership Foundation in Orange County to provide mentoring services for placed children who need mentors.

**PRACTICE INDICATORS**  
*(Measured over last 90 days)*

<b>Practice Indicators</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Service Needs</b>	<b>Assessment &amp; Linkages</b>	<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>Tracking &amp; Adjustment</b>
<b>2014-2015 Scores</b>	6	6	5	4	5
<b>2015-2016 Scores</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

In the area of Engagement, the Group Home Program Director reported that the Group Home makes consistent and good efforts to engage the placed children and key people in decisions that are being made for them. The Group Home Program Director emphasized that being inclusive is crucial to the success of the services they provide. With collaboration between the Group Home's internal treatment team and the outside services agencies, the goals of ensuring safety, permanency, and well-being for the placed children and their family members can be better realized and achieved. Although the Group Home currently does not have DCFS children placed, the Group Home maintains contact with the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer to provide updates regarding their staffing information and program services.

In the area of Service Needs, the Group Home Program Director reported that services provided by the Group Home include ensuring the placed children's basic needs are met, point-based motivational system, individual and group counseling, Wraparound services, recreational services, transportation, community based services, vocational training services, and after care services. Information from formal assessments and written reports are used to formulate each placed child's individual Needs and Services Plan (NSP).

In the area of Assessment & Linkages, the Group Home family teacher reported that the Group Home staff utilizes daily observation of and socialization with the placed child to gain a clear picture of the placed child's strengths and needs. If the placed child is in need of services, the Group Home immediately takes action to make sure supports are in place to ensure the placed child's success. In addition, the Group Home National Database is an electronic management information system, which allows for daily collection, transmittal and central storage of program data. This database allows the Group Home's Program Directors to access useful data used for decision-making and trend analysis within and across programs. The placed child's progress is monitored in a variety of ways throughout the course of treatment to ensure appropriate and effective treatment decisions.

In the area of Teamwork, the Group Home Senior Program Director reported that the Group Home has made efforts to address the issues from the 2014-2015 QAR. During the 2014-2015 QAR, the OHCMD noted that the Group Home needed to ensure the key people in the placed children's lives work as a team that meets, talks, and makes plans together. The Group Home Senior Program Director reported that the Group Home has addressed this issue, as the Group Home is teaming up with placement agencies to ensure quarterly meetings are held to discuss the placed child's progress, needs and concerns, as well as to update or modify their treatment goals. Additionally, the Group Home holds various meetings, such as weekly consultation meetings, weekly administrative meetings and monthly community meetings to strengthen their internal collaboration to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being for the children and their families. The family teacher added that, through all the teamwork processes, she could provide quality care to all placed children.

In the area of Tracking & Adjustment, the Group Home Program Director indicated that the Group Home tracks placed children's progress, adjustments to interventions and services through daily database notes and communication with staff, Special Incident Reports, point level system, NSPs and treatment team meetings. In addition, adjustment is based on the placed child and family characteristics, significant events that occur during a child's stay and ratings of improvement in the placed child's behavior. The Group Home assesses each placed child's needs and responds accordingly.

## **NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES**

In June 2016, the OHCMD met with the Group Home to discuss their Contract Administration Division's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review results. There were no deficiencies noted, and the Group Home did not require a Corrective Action Plan.

In June 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the Group Home's implementation of their 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan. The Group Home could not be evaluated in any of the focus areas for the 2015-2016 QAR, as there were no placed DCFS children. However, the OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training and consultation to the Group Home and will plan to evaluate the Group Home in March 2017.